(d) what are the criteria fixed by Government for issuing such agencies and

(e) the number of licences for LPG Agencies and retail outlets which have been issued in each State on the recommendations of the Members of Parliament during each of the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a)

	RO	LPG
1989-90 .	304	184
1990-91 .	228	100
Total .	532	284

(b) A few cases of benami transactions of dealerships and distributorships have been reported by the Marketing Oil Companies. While some of them have been terminated after investigation, other cases are at various stages of investigation.

(c) and (d) LPG distributorships and RO dealerships are opened in a phased manner at different locations in the country subject to product availability and economic viability under various Marketing Plans.

(e) Selection of all dealers are carried out as per Industry Guidelines under various categories through approved Selection Boards and also at the discretion of Government.

Conference on Petroleum Sector

282. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a recent Conference on the Petroleum Sector has suggested gradual deregulation of prices of petroleum and petroleum products ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) what steps are being taken to implement its recommendations ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (c) In a Conference convened by the Institute of Public Enterprise and "Urja" on February 28, 1992, steps like international parity price for crude, freedom to refineries to purchase crude from any source, fixation of ex-refinery product prices on the basis of international refinery margin with suitable adjustments and determination of product patterns in the refineries by market price etc. were suggested towards deregulation of prices. Changes in the pricing are made by the Government keeping in view costs, growth in demand and socio-economic factors.

Setting up of Petro-Chemical Projects

283. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gas Authority of India Ltd. has proposed to set up two petro chemical projects ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) the present stage of implementation of these Units ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Gas Authority of India Ltd. has proposed to set up a Petro-chemical Complex for the production of Propylene at Bijaipur in M.P. and production of Ethylene and other down-stream products at Auraiya in U.P. The proposal for setting up the Auraiya Petro chemical Complex is under the consideration of Government. In the case of Bijaipur, the technological viability is under examination.

Oil Refinery at Numaligarh in Assam

284. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government had decided to set up a fourth Oil Refinery at Numaligarh in Assam ;